

GREATER TORONTO APARTMENT ASSOCIATION
action UPDATE

City of Toronto Important Issue Updates for Members

*September 15, 2009
Release*

For Immediate

Waste Levy

As members will know, today will begin the court case against the City of Toronto with respect to the by-law that implemented the apartment waste levy effective July 1, 2008. We are aware that there are still hundreds of buildings that have not received even their first bill and we know that many of you were affected by the recent CUPE strike for all or a portion of your garbage collection services. The association attended the meeting of the Multi-family Waste Diversion Group on September 8, 2009 and raised these issues with staff. While the level of communication from them has been very poor since we met with the General Manager of Solid Waste and the Executive Assistants to the Mayor on May 22, 2009 we are hopeful that a few of these issues will soon be resolved. In the meantime, the by-law must be challenged and we will proceed accordingly.

Further, the association has short-listed and is conducting interviews of two prospective private waste collectors and hopes to announce very shortly a special member pricing arrangement for those members wishing to opt out of City provided waste collection services.

Rent Reduction Notices

Despite several meetings and discussions with senior staff in various City of Toronto divisions about the pending rent reduction notification program and the fact that the property tax reduction program was not offset against the enormous costs of the waste levy, the City has proceeded to mail out 3,266 building notices of rent reductions due to those properties attaining a 2.5% or greater tax reduction. This represents close to 129,000 apartment units – nearly 50% of all the private rental buildings in Toronto. Back in April, the association met with the CFO of Toronto Cam Weldon and warned the City back then that they needed to act to ensure that any property tax reduction was compared with the increased costs for waste collection to determine whether or not a property had a “real” reduction in overall taxes and charges. The City refused to act. Members have been advised under previous communication that they will need to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) to vary the reduction. This is a time consuming and expensive proposition but appears the only option in the meantime. The association is in discussions with legal counsel and the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario (FRPO) on asking the Province to act.

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Sub-metering

Although this issue is one of provincial jurisdiction, the association attended the meeting of the City of Toronto Rental Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC) on September 14, 2009 where the Advocacy Centre for Tenants in Ontario (ACTO) made a very thorough presentation on their interpretation of the recent Ontario Energy Board (OEB) sub-metering in apartments decision and tenants' rights. Members should be prepared for both the City of Toronto and the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations (FMTA) to be very active in buildings that have sub-metered to educate residents on the OEB decision and are likely to cause considerable problems. In fact, they made somewhat veiled threats to target the property managers who are the "poster children" of sub-metering.

The association has not been active on this issue given it is strictly within the provincial realm. Our sister association FRPO has been diligently working through the August 13, 2009 OEB decision and is endeavouring to provide advice to property managers on how to adhere to the ruling. However, in the case of Toronto, this issue has been overly political and is a lightning rod in the landlord-tenant warfare initiated by groups like FMTA and ACTO. No matter how members decided to react to the OEB ruling, you should be aware of this campaign that will likely be funded by the City of Toronto.

Energy Conservation

Finally, the association is pleased to announce that **Rob Detta Colli** has been engaged by the *Tower Wise* Collaborative to work in the association's offices on a one-year contract as our Energy Conservation Advisor effective today. Rob's responsibilities will be to work with apartment building owners and managers to assist them to take advantage of various energy conservation programs, grants and rebates offered by the three levels of government and other agencies. We welcome Rob aboard and will provide members greater detail on this initiative in the coming days.

Final Thoughts

As we suspected, it looks as if the onslaught and attack on the rental housing industry is alive and well. Your membership in the association is critical in helping us continue to represent your interests. We look forward to your continued support. If we may help in anyway, please let us know.

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